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Letter dated 20 January 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Angola to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward herewith the assessment of the work of the Security Council for the month of November 2003, during the Presidency of Angola (see annex).

In the absence of any objection by the members of the Council to the present assessment, I kindly request that it be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ismael A. **Gaspar Martins**
Ambassador
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Annex

Annex to the letter dated 20 January 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Angola to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the Security Council work during the Presidency of Angola (November 2003)

Introduction

The Security Council was presided in the month of November 2003 by Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins, Permanent Representative of Angola to the United Nations. During the month, the Council held 29 meetings: 11 closed consultations; 6 open briefings; 5 formal meetings; 4 private meetings and 3 public meetings; adopted five resolutions: on the situation of Côte d'Ivoire, on the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, on Cyprus and on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait; adopted six presidential statements: on Somalia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the importance of mine action for peacekeeping operations, the Great Lakes region and the situation between Iraq and Kuwait. The President of the Security Council issued statements to the press relating to Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Afghanistan.

The Security Council held a high-level public meeting on the Great Lakes region, with the participation of the Secretary-General, who delivered a statement, ministers of countries of the region, the representative of the current Chairman of the African Union, the representative of the Chairman of the Commission of the African Union and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region. The aim of the Presidency in bringing the theme to the Council was to build on previous decisions of the Council and other forums towards the holding, at an appropriate time, of an international conference on peace, security, democracy and development in the Great Lakes region of Africa, to be organized under the aegis of the United Nations and the African Union, with a view to achieving sustainable peace, security and stability for all countries in the region, in particular through the full normalization of their relations and the establishment of confidence-building measures and mechanisms. The Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2003/23) in which it reiterated its commitment to the holding of such a conference.

Africa

Guinea-Bissau

On 18 November, the Security Council, presided by the Minister of External Relations of Angola, held a private meeting with a delegation of Guinea-Bissau headed by the President of the country, Mr. Henrique Pereira Rosa. The Secretary-General took part in the meeting and made a statement. The President of the Economic and Social Council, the representative of the current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the representative of the

Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau of the Economic and Social Council and the Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau also took part in the meeting. The President of Guinea-Bissau, addressing the Council, referred to the political transition in his country and gave assurances that elections would be held according to the timetable foreseen in the Political Transition Charter. A communiqué on the session (S/PV.4860) was issued on 18 November 2003.

Côte d'Ivoire

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire was under close scrutiny by the Security Council during the month. The Council, in closed consultations held on 11 November, considered the report of the Secretary-General (S/2003/1069) on the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI), which provided an assessment of the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and described the activities of MINUCI. On 13 November, the Council adopted resolution 1514 (2003), in which it extended the mandate of MINUCI until 4 February 2004 and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council on how peace efforts of MINUCI might be improved and in particular the possible reinforcement of the United Nations presence in Côte d'Ivoire. Also on 13 November, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2003/20) on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. On 24 November, the Council, with the participation of the Secretary-General, held a private meeting with a ministerial delegation of ECOWAS, which had come to New York to press its case with the Security Council, in relation to the appeal by the Heads of State of ECOWAS member States to the Security Council to consider the strengthening of the ECOWAS mission in Côte d'Ivoire and its transformation into a United Nations peacekeeping operation. A communiqué on the session (S/PV.4874) was issued on 24 November 2003.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Security Council on 19 November adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2003/21) on the situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in which the Council took note of the final report (S/2003/1027) of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which had concluded its work. In the report, the Panel emphasized the connection, in the context of the continuing conflict, between the illegal exploitation of natural resources and trafficking in raw materials and arms, which had been highlighted by the Panel.

On behalf of the Security Council, the President of the Council, on 12 November 2003, issued a press statement condemning the violence in Ituri on 5 November, which had been provoked by militiamen of the Union des patriotes congolais and other militia, and which in turn had prompted a MONUC response.

Liberia

The Security Council, in closed consultations on 6 November, considered the situation in Liberia. The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hédi Annabi, provided a briefing to the Council on the security situation, the deployment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the implementation

of the Accra Peace Agreement and the humanitarian situation. Concerning the sanctions regime on Liberia, the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1343 (2001) concerning Liberia presented an oral report referring to the necessity for the Committee to continue its consideration of the recommendations of the Panel of Experts, with respect to maintaining all sanctions imposed by the United Nations, banning the export of diamonds until an international certification scheme is established; the monitoring of all borders by UNMIL to avoid timber exports; keeping in place the arms embargo; and recommendations concerning civil aviation and the maritime sectors as well as economic and financial issues.

Somalia

On 4 November, the Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Winston Tubman, presented to the members of the Security Council the report of the Secretary-General (S/2003/987) on the situation in Somalia. The Council discussed the report in closed consultations. On 19 November, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2003/19) on the situation in Somalia, in which it reaffirmed its commitment to a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the situation in Somalia and its respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity of the country, consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Central African region

The Security Council held a public meeting on 24 November to consider the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations system and the Central African subregion in the maintenance of peace and security. The basis of the Council's deliberations was the interim report of a multidisciplinary assessment mission that had visited central Africa from 8 to 22 June, focusing on issues of peace, security, economic development, humanitarian affairs, human rights and HIV/AIDS, and aiming at defining subregional strategies to address those challenges.

The Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Tuliameni Kalomoh, head of the mission, introduced the report, in which the mission determined that a holistic approach was needed to address the linkage between conflict and poverty, involving all actors concerned with the region.

The Secretary-General agreed with the assessment as a whole and requested a thorough review of all programmes of the Organization in terms of their effectiveness. Regarding the establishment of a United Nations office in the subregion, the Secretary-General noted that there were already a number of offices in the subregion, as well as other initiatives in which the members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) were involved. Instead of establishing an office, he proposed the appointment of a special envoy to focus on political issues in the subregion.

In addition to the members of the Security Council, statements were made by the representatives of the Congo, Italy (on behalf of the European Union), the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Chad and Equatorial Guinea, as well as the Permanent Observer of the African Union and the Deputy Secretary-General for Political Affairs of ECCAS.

Asia

Afghanistan

The Head of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan, the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, on 11 November, presented to the members of the Council the report of the mission. In the report, the mission recognized the significant progress achieved by the Afghan Government with the support of the international community, in implementing the Bonn Agreement and recovering from the devastation caused by two decades of war. It recognized also that major challenges lay ahead and much remained to be done, and furthermore stressed that insecurity caused by terrorist activities, factional fighting and drug-related crimes remained the major concerns in Afghanistan. The report was adopted by the Council without debate.

The President, on behalf of the Security Council, issued two press statements on Afghanistan, on 12 and 17 November, one condemning in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attack against the United Nations headquarters in Kandahar, on 11 November, and the other condemning the murder, on 16 November, of Bettina Goislard, a staff member of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Middle East

On 19 November, the Security Council held its monthly regular open briefing on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Sir Kieran Prendergast, briefed the Security Council, stating that with a new Palestinian Prime Minister in place, all parties involved in peace-building between Israelis and Palestinians should recommit themselves to the process and leave behind the inaction of the past month. In the ensuing closed consultations, the members of the Council agreed on the text of a draft resolution, sponsored by Bulgaria, Chile, China, France, Germany, Guinea, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and adopted unanimously as resolution 1515 (2003). In the resolution, the Council endorsed the Quartet performance-based road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and calls upon the parties to fulfil their obligations under the road map in cooperation with the Quartet and to achieve the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security.

Iraq

On 21 November, the Security Council heard briefings by the Permanent Representatives of the United States of America and of the United Kingdom, in response to paragraph 24 of Security Council resolution 1483 (2003), in which the Council had encouraged the United Kingdom and the United States to inform the Council at regular intervals of their efforts under the resolution. The United States Permanent Representative centred his briefing on the agreement between the Iraqi Governing Council and the Coalition Provisional Authority for the political transition leading to the restoration of Iraq sovereignty; the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom centred his briefing on the provision of basic services, as well as economic reconstruction, human rights and justice issues.

On 24 November, the Security Council adopted resolution 1518 (2003), in which it established a Committee of the Security Council to identify funds or other financial resources of the previous Government of Iraq or removed from Iraq, or acquired by Saddam Hussein or other senior officials of the former Iraqi regime or their families.

Oil-for-food programme

The month of November marked a historic moment for the United Nations, with the end of the oil-for-food programme. The Security Council held consultations on 19 November in which the Executive Director of the Iraq Programme, Benon Sevan, briefed the Council on the final arrangements for the closing of the programme. On 20 November, the Council held an open briefing in which the Secretary-General made a statement on the end of the programme, marking the "completion of one of the largest, most complex and most unusual tasks it has ever entrusted to the Secretariat — the only humanitarian programme ever to have been funded entirely from resources belonging to the nation it was designed to help". The Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2003/24) on the same day, underlining the exceptionally important role of the programme in providing humanitarian assistance to the people of Iraq under the regime of sanctions imposed by the Security Council on the previous Government of Iraq.

Europe

Cyprus

On 21 November, the Council, in closed consultations, considered the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus (S/2003/1078), covering developments from 21 May to 10 November and bringing up to date the record of activities carried out by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) as well as the mission of good offices of the Secretary-General. In the final observations of the report, the Secretary-General expressed the belief that only the achievement of a comprehensive settlement would bring an end to the Cyprus problem and that in the absence of such a comprehensive settlement, the presence of UFICYP on the island continued to be necessary for the maintenance of the ceasefire. The Secretary-General therefore recommended that the Security Council extend the mandate of the Force for a further period, until 15 June 2004.

The Security Council on 24 November adopted resolution 1517 (2003), in which it extended the mandate of UNFICYP for a further period, ending 15 June 2004.

Kosovo

The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, on 6 November, provided the Security Council with a briefing on the new policy for Kosovo, which would be a main thrust of the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo until 2005. The aim of the policy was to establish, in the framework of the strategy of "norms before status", a mechanism for monitoring the performance of the provisional institutions of Kosovo in complying with the norms, with the ultimate objective of defining the final status of the territory.

Georgia

On 12 November, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Georgia, Heidi Tagliavini, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia (S/2003/1019), submitted in compliance with the Security Council's request that the Secretary-General report three months after the 30 July extension of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia. In the observations sections of the report, the Secretary-General expressed his hope that practical cooperation on matters of mutual interest would further contribute to a climate of trust between the two sides, but stressed that in order to achieve lasting stability and security, the political issue at the heart of the conflict must ultimately be addressed. The Secretary-General urged the sides, in particular the Abkhaz side, to enter into a meaningful dialogue on the core issue of the conflict.

Other issues

The importance of mine action for peacekeeping operations

The Security Council met in an open meeting on 13 November to consider the item entitled "The importance of mine action for peacekeeping operations". The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, and the Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, Martin Dahinden, provided briefings to the Council. They stressed that landmines, unexploded ordnance and all other explosive remnants of war constituted a threat to the security of United Nations workers, peacekeepers and affected populations; they also hampered the ability to conduct peacekeeping operations and to deliver humanitarian assistance. Mine action contributed to lasting peace and security by removing the threat, empowering populations to cope with risk and assisting those who fell victim to mines.

On 19 November, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2003/22), in which it expressed its grave concern at the harmful and widespread impact of landmines and unexploded ordnance on civilian populations and welcomed the effective coordination of mine action activities within the United Nations system and the important mandate of the United Nations Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Council also recognized the significant contribution to mine action made by States, international and regional organizations and local and international non-governmental organizations.

HIV/AIDS

The Security Council held an open briefing on 21 November on the item entitled "The responsibility of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security: HIV/AIDS and international peacekeeping operations". The background of the briefing was Council resolution 1308 (2000), adopted on 17 July 2000, in which the Council had encouraged all interested Member States to consider voluntary HIV/AIDS testing and counselling for troops to be deployed in peacekeeping operations and had expressed concern at the potentially damaging impact of HIV/AIDS on the health of international peacekeeping personnel, including support personnel.

The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, and Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Peter Piot, briefed the Security Council on the implementation of resolution 1308 (2000), which addressed HIV/AIDS among peacekeeping forces and their host populations.

Mr. Guéhenno, in his briefing concluded that there was a need to ensure that dynamic and responsive HIV/AIDS programmes existed for the duration of a peacekeeping mandate. He characterized the efforts made to date as but an initial step in an expanding and evolving programme

Dr. Piot said that resolution 1308 (2000) had reshaped the global landscape of the fight against AIDS. Despite the fact that the Security Council had not taken the opportunity to expressly address AIDS in a number of recent resolutions establishing and extending United Nations mission operating in regions heavily affected by the epidemic, he concluded that the Council resolve had been crucial to gaining focused government response to the threat of AIDS in a peacekeeping context and had opened the door for UNAIDS to work with defence and civil defence forces as part of comprehensive national AIDS responses. Council members addressed the issue and the Presidency prepared a summary document containing the main conclusions of the briefing.

Terrorism

On 20 November, the Security Council adopted resolution 1516 (2003), in which it condemned in the strongest terms the bomb attacks in Istanbul, Turkey, on 15 and 20 November 2003 as well as other terrorist acts in various countries, and regarded such acts, like any act of terrorism, as a threat to peace and security. The Council moreover expressed its reinforced determination to combat all forms of terrorism, in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations.

Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999)

On 12 November, the Security Council met in closed consultations to consider the oral quarterly reports provided by the Chairman of the Sanctions Committee against al-Qa'idah and the Taliban. The Chairman of the Committee referred to the updating and the increase in the quality of the information contained in the list of individuals under sanctions; the work accomplished by the Committee with respect to procedures and the standardization of applications for exemptions; the activities of the monitoring group; and the meetings held by the Chairman of the Committee on the fact-finding visit to Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Indonesia and Germany.